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THREE HISTORICAL PERFORMANCES  
OF  
PIANOFORTE MUSIC.



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ERNST PAUER'S

THREE

HISTORICAL PERFORMANCES

OF

PIANOFORTE MUSIC,

*IN STRICTLY CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.*

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Second Performance.

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- |                           |   |                                      |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| a. LA FAVORITE (CHACONNE) | } | ... <i>Couperin.</i><br>(1668—1733.) |
| b. LA TENDRE NANETTE      |   |                                      |

—o—

IN the annals of music we find several families who for successive generations devoted their life to the art ; I need only recall the names of Couperin and Bach. For more than 120 years the Couperin family produced clever musicians, the best of them being François Couperin. This distinguished composer was born in 1668 in Paris, and received the first musical instruction from the organist Tolin. In 1696 he obtained an appointment as organist of St. Gervais, and in 1701 he became Claveciniste du Roy and teacher of the Royal family. He died in 1733. Couperin's compositions, of which a very fine edition was printed in 1713, consist of Suites de Pièces, and are decidedly interesting as regards finish and originality of invention. The French music of that time was in a great degree influenced by the political state of France, and more particularly by the activity of the great king, Louis XIV., whose will, energy, and despotic power constituted him the dictator of Europe. Louis XIV. was shrewd enough to patronize much real and good art, because the glory of the professors reverted in a great measure to himself. The time of Louis XIV. was eminently the period of great men in France. Among the painters, we may remind of Poussin, Gaspar, Claude Lorraine, Lebeau, Lesueur ; among the statesmen, Mazarin, Colbert, and Louvois ; among the generals, Turenne and Condé ; while in literature, Racine, Corneille, Molière, Boileau, and a host of others, rendered

this reign the commencement of a new and brighter era. It is not astonishing that the musical compositions of that period in France were more refined than the productions of the Italians and Germans. But, apart from the direct influence exercised by the Court of Louis XIII. and XIV. on the musicians who filled appointments there, the French had for some time enjoyed musical institutions which went far towards creating a musical taste in the people. We need mention only the Troubadours of Provence, the *Maîtrises*, singers attached to the Cathedral-service, the *Violons du Roy*, quite a unique establishment, and last, not least, the King's private band.

The French music represents the pre-eminent art of the time ; it is refined and interesting, and with respect to form and finish almost plastic. Yet, in spite of its merits, it is somewhat cold and conventional, and lacks of a certain quickening and animating fire. The *agréments* or manners, as they called the little turns, trilles, shakes, arpeggios, runs, and so on, are finished with the same care that we might fancy must have presided at the completion of the toilette of Madame de Montespan ; in short, everything was done to ensure effect and brilliancy. Many people might say, "this is not true art !" Granted, it is not the art of a Handel or Bach ; still, it cannot be denied that elegance, finish, and taste, are also attributes of art, and that we ought to be thankful to any artist who contributed towards the consolidation and perfection of music in any of its branches. We find that Couperin introduced taste and elegance into the French Clavecin-music. The direct aim he had in view with his compositions we may best learn from his own words. In his preface he says : "In composing these pieces, I had always a distinct object in view ; different occasions have furnished me with the ideas ; and the titles they bear indicate what I wished to

express. A closer description ought not to be asked for. I will only say that the titles indicate that my pieces are a kind of portraits, which have sometimes been easily recognized on performance. The majority of my pieces are dedicated to those amiable and fascinating originals who inspired me to pourtray them in music. For more than a year the engraving and printing of this volume has been going on ; I have not cared to spare expense or trouble ; and the extreme intelligence, attention, and precision which were brought to bear on my work will also be found in the manner of its publication. Regarding my compositions, I may say that their novel character and their diversity caused them to be most favourably received by the musical world ; and I hope that those works which have been added, and which were not yet known, will have a similar success." Thus far Monsier Couperin ; he can hardly be said to have erred on the side of modesty.

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LES NIAIS DE SOLOGNE ... .. *Rameau.*  
(1683—1764.)

—o—

JEAN PHILIPPE RAMEAU, almost the greatest name the French can claim, was born at Dijon, in 1683. Already as a child of eight years, he surprised every one by his wonderful playing ; and later, he rivalled not only Couperin, but even the celebrated Louis Marchand, then considered the best French claveciniste. Rameau was appointed organist at Clermont. In 1722 he published his celebrated “*Traité de l’Harmonie*,” in which he promulgated his new system. Before Rameau had published his theory, he had not given to the world anything but short pieces for the organ and clavecin. His enemies used to make this a matter of reproach, and sneeringly asserted, that in spite of his wonderful theory, he could write for nothing but the clavecin. This assertion hurt Rameau so much, that, when already fifty years old, he suddenly started for Italy to study and observe the system of the Italian opera, and more particularly the opera of Naples. He returned after three years, and vainly endeavoured to find a suitable libretto. At last he received from the Abbé Pellegrin the libretto “*Hippolite et Aricie*,” for which Rameau promised to pay fifty Louis-d’ors. But at the very first rehearsal the Abbé Pellegrin was so delighted with Rameau’s music, that he embraced the composer and tore the agreement for the price to pieces. Rameau afterwards wrote twenty-two operas for the French theatre, and put the formerly adored Lully completely into the shade. Thus we find in Rameau a very clever organist and claveciniste, an ingenious theorist, and a successful composer of operas ;

a man of the stamp of Handel and Bach, serious in his studies, earnest in everything he undertook. Rameau was a deep thinker, a philosophical mind, who did not, like Monsieur Couperin, devote himself to little portraits of Court-ladies and similar persons, but had a deeper and broader appreciation of his noble art. We find this also in his compositions. He is more sparing than Couperin in the use of the "agréments" or "manners." His music is more simple, natural, and clear. Rameau has more affinity with the German school than any one of his contemporaries.

"Les Niais de Sologne" is an air with two variations from the first part of Rameau's works for the clavecin.

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SUITE No. 6, Second Collection ... .. *Handel.*  
(1685—1759.)

—o—

IN 1720 Handel published “Suites de Pièces,” and prefaced the first edition with the following words: “I have been obliged to publish Some of the following Lessons because Surreptitious and incorrect copies of them have got abroad. I have added several new ones, to make the work more useful, which, if it meets with a favourable reception, I will Still proceed to publish more, reckoning it my duty, with my Small talent, to serve a Nation from which I have received so Generous a protection.—G. F. HANDEL.”

The promised continuation never appeared; however, Walsh, who pirated the first part, published a collection in 1733, obtained surreptitiously from the composer, as a second part, and the above Suite is taken from this interesting volume. That Handel’s consent was not given to the publication of the so-called second part, is shown by comparing it with the first, which consists of Suites of four to eight pieces, while those of the second have but two or three. None will now complain of Mr. Walsh’s proceeding in giving publicity, to the lasting delight of the musical world, to a set of compositions which might never otherwise have seen the light, and been withheld from the enthusiastic admirers of the great Saxon! The most important piece of the above too short Suite is undoubtedly the masterly Gigue. There is a life in it, a vivacity, a spirit, quite enchanting. It is in some way related in this *genre* to the celebrated Saltarello of the Italian Symphony by Mendelssohn.

SONATA IN D MAJOR, Op. 40. No. 3. *M. Clementi.*  
(1752—1832.)

ADAGIO MOLTO—ALLEGRO—ADAGIO—FINALE.

—o—

THIS Sonata consists of three movements. The first movement opens with an *adagio molto*, the earnest and solemn chords of which excite the expectation of the audience. In this instance that expectation is not verified; the grand chords soon disappear, and are followed in a somewhat tame fashion by an Allegro in D major, which is founded on a subject singularly favourable for imitation, counterpoint, &c. &c. The bass, however, of this first movement shows an extraordinary heaviness and immobility. Such a bass Mozart and Haydn called the “growling” bass, and it actually represents a speciality of Italian composers. We shall find it again in Rossini’s overtures to *Semiramide*, *Gazza Ladra*, and *Barbiere di Siviglia*. It arises from simple laziness. That Clementi and Rossini could write splendid basses, they amply showed in many of their works. In this instance Clementi probably did not think it worth while to give himself more trouble than was actually indispensable. After the second subject, which is not particularly interesting, is to be observed a passage which is, so to speak, annexed or tied on to it. This instance will testify to the correctness of the remark, that Clementi looked at the Sonata as a convenient mould in which to cast his decidedly intelligent and original passages. With Mozart and Beethoven the passage grows

as it were out of the composition ; with Clementi it is like an annexe ; it is attached to the composition in the lightest and loosest manner. It might actually be left out without disturbing the equilibrium of the piece ; at the same time it must be owned that there is much freshness, brightness, and animation in the whole movement. The Adagio has a touch of the French chansonette ; it is decidedly conceived in that most peculiar French taste which we find for instance in Rameau's beautiful Romanza, " Les tendres plaintes," and in some of Couperin's little pieces. But the fact that it suggests these reminiscences can certainly not be taken as a reproach. To profit by a good example is never a fault, and if Mozart had a right to compose a fantasia in " Handel's style," or Sebastian Bach to write an " Italian concerto," Clementi is certainly justified in setting one of his slow movements in the style of a French chansonette. But here again we may observe that the andante is *not* the strong point of the Italians. This slow movement of Clementi's remains merely on the surface, he never dives deeper or tries to win from the charming melody any further gain ; he is satisfied with presenting it in its simplest manner, and, to tell the truth, he is right, as the theme is really so charming that we can well hear it twice over without any further variation or elaboration. The last movement is by far the best. Here Clementi is in his element. Now indeed we have bustling life and movement. What sound ! what animation ! what hurry ! He can scarcely persuade himself to settle down for a little rest. His facile finger must almost have delighted in its lightning flight across the keys, and revelled in the consciousness of the brilliant effect. As a contrast to the cheerful life animating the part in the major key, he introduces a " minore " which is nothing less than a beautifully constructed " canon." The great speed of the piece prevents



us from recognising the complicated structure of this difficult part of musical workmanship. He plays with his subjects with as much ease as an Indian juggler plays with his knives ; up and down, down and up, the subject sometimes in the right hand, and again in the left. To any one who feels a stiffness in the left hand we should recommend a dose of this valuable musical tonic, it will soon remedy such deficiencies, and bring about an even balance between the two hands.

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FANTASIA, Op. 77. ... .. *L. van Beethoven.*  
(1770—1827.)



AMONG the pianoforte works of Beethoven we find only two Fantasias. The first is the present one, the second is the celebrated Choral Fantasia with orchestral accompaniments, Op. 80. The Fantasia here chosen is one of the most interesting and original pieces of the great master. It represents, as it seems, in a kind of review, Beethoven's ideas as they passed before his critical eye. At first the ideas appear only in a broken, rhapsodical manner. Scarcely has a subject begun, before it is interrupted by a scale, which reminds one of the action of a painter who throws a rough sketch on the canvas, looks at it for a moment, but not being satisfied with it, effaces it with a single stroke of the brush. At last, after Beethoven has almost lost his temper at not finding what he actually wanted, comes a modest, unpretending air; it seems quite unconscious of its own beauty, in such a meek and simple manner does it make its appearance. But our experienced master soon perceives that it is "the right subject in the right place," and at once sets to work to show how many beauties are hidden under that simple garb. With a careful hand he adds one adornment after another, till the style becomes grand, almost imposing. The rhapsodic scales begin again; it seems as if the composer wished to get rid of that pleasant subject, but he cannot. He is spellbound by its beauty; resistance is impossible; he takes it up again and bids it farewell in a most affectionate manner. One single scale, like a sudden flash of lightning in a pure sky, finishes the whole. And

this very end, which with a second-rate composer would be unsatisfactory and uncalled for, is in Beethoven's instance the surest sign of genius. The abrupt way in which he finishes his Fantasia, shows to us what he thought himself of a smaller composition of this kind. He actually did not think it of sufficient consequence or importance to finish it in an elaborate or careful manner. He merely considered it as a kind of passing whim.

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# VARIATIONS, "VIENI DORINA BELLA," *Weber*. (1786—1826).

—o—

THE composer who has established the firmest hold upon the people's hearts is undoubtedly Carl Maria von Weber. He is in one respect, alike in England and in Germany, the people's composer. His *Freyschütz* enjoys a greater popularity than any of Mozart's operas ; some of his piano pieces are even greater favourites than the songs without words of Mendelssohn ; and a great many of his songs and choruses have become national in their wide diffusion. Among composers, Weber is a German of the Germans ; none of his countrymen was so entirely uninfluenced by the French or Italian music as he, and it was this very independence and trust in his own powers which endeared him so much to his own countrymen, and commanded in such a high degree the respect of other nations, and especially of that French nation, at that very time, in 1813-14, engaged in mortal strife against the patriotic chivalry of the newly-awakened nationality of Germany. In the character of "Max" in Weber's *Freyschütz*, the Teuton recognised the symbol of the German huntsman, and in "Agatha" he found the picture of the tender, loving German maiden. The fresh, vigorous huntsman's choruses again, struck an answering chord, not only in German hearts, but found an echo in every manly breast of Europe. For this reason, Weber's name will for ever remain as that of a composer of truly cosmopolitan fame. At the same time, he is as thoroughly German as Robert Burns was Scotch, Oliver Goldsmith English, and Béranger French. Besides this striking characteristic, there is another feature

in Weber's music which brings with it an irresistible charm ; that is, his romantic feeling. In Weber the romantic feeling is paramount ; and in his three great operas, *Der Freyschütz*, *Euryanthe*, and *Oberon*, he shows this feeling in three different phases. In the *Freyschütz* we are made acquainted with the romance of the hunter's life ; in *Euryanthe* it is the chivalrous French romance which delights us ; and in *Oberon* we revel in the romance of the fairy world. It is quite natural that after the turmoil of a daily, and sometimes most uninteresting work, we should delight in a translation into the mimic world of fancy ; and if such fairy-like and fanciful creations are produced in such beauty as Weber can call forth, the change becomes not only refreshing, but elevating.

It cannot be asserted that either Bach or Handel, Mozart or Haydn, and least of all Beethoven, influenced Weber. Owing to an irregular education, Weber never mastered the rules of composition to such an extent as to acquire a systematic, regular, and even style, and such a continuity as we admire in the works of the above-mentioned masters. Amongst the great composers, Weber alone was fragmentary and rhapsodical. His episodes sometimes appear to have no clear or decisive reasons ; each of his Andantes or his Overtures possesses as much material as Mozart or Haydn would have required for two Andantes or two Overtures. With regard to the Overtures however, it must be admitted that Weber desired to present in each a kind of musical prologue, indicating the main character of the opera.

But the fragmentary style, which, according to the true laws of the art, could be considered a reproach to Weber, is, under the circumstances, not a fault. Whenever he breaks off, he is sure to introduce a phrase of such singular beauty, and such subtle charm, that the hearer is almost



glad of its appearance, and readily forgives the unobservation of logical principles. With regard to harmonious changes, Weber is mostly very happy; there is in his modulations a highly pleasing euphony, to which however power and spirit are never sacrificed. The application of his fundamental bass is sometimes defective and faulty; his part-writing is in some instances forced and clumsy. The accompaniments, again, are not always in true relation to the melodies: all these defects arise from the want of a proper, regular, and patient training. But what are these deficiencies when compared to the high qualities of which his works can boast? For richness, fire, enthusiasm, he is as distinguished as for tenderness, grace, and sweetness of feeling. Besides, the conclusion of his Overtures and Sonatas displays a climax which carries us on with an irresistible might, and in which he is unparalleled, if we except a single instance—and that is Beethoven's third Overture to *Leonora*.

For Weber's contributions to pianoforte literature, we cannot be too thankful. The piano seems under his hand to be transformed into a new instrument. Chopin, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, and Thalberg have so largely profited by the initiative taken by Weber, that it is but bare justice to point out the improvements we owe directly to him. Before Weber, Dussek was the first who used the chords up to the interval of the tenth. Weber accepted this treatment almost unconditionally. He is the first who emancipated the left hand entirely from the right. Again, he is the first who applied in an artistic manner the peculiarly charming effect of accompanying the melody with the shortest possible chords, so as to throw, as it were, the chief singing quality into the right hand, which executes the theme. He also invented the modern valse; his ever-fresh "*Invitation à la Valse*" marks the dawn

of a new era. To the Polonaise he imparted its true character. In short, Weber infused into the piano a new soul ; like Beethoven, he extracted from it a richness of sound which bids fair to rival the majestic strains of the organ ; he makes the instrument, deemed cold and passionless till then, discourse tender love, and so assists in rendering it the exponent of the innermost emotions of the soul.

It is not astonishing that Weber's innovations were not by any means readily accepted by his contemporaries ; neither Hummel nor Cramer put much faith in his doctrines. Both pronounced his works incongruous, badly constructed, difficult to finger, and impracticable in design. But posterity did justice to Weber ; and his Concertstück, his two Polonaises, his Invitation à la Valse, and his Rondo in E flat, enjoy a popularity rivalling that of Beethoven's Sonatas and Mendelssohn's Songs without Words. In personal character Weber was one of the most amiable of men. Weak health, indeed, made him sensitive and irritable ; but he was so sincere, and so thoroughly noble-minded, that his failings only endeared him the more to his friends—they were so thoroughly a part of the man.

On modern music Weber had a decided influence. Not only have Schumann, Chopin, and Mendelssohn largely profited by his originality, but his influence on the talented opera composer Maschner, and on the celebrated Richard Wagner, is undeniable. None of his works, indeed, will bear comparison with Beethoven's creations. They would not stand this severe test ; and it seems that Weber himself was aware of the colossal greatness of his contemporary, though he was not at all sympathetically inclined towards Beethoven, and even uttered some very injudicious remarks about the "confusion" which pervades Beethoven's style. But when these remarks escaped him,

Weber was only twenty-three years old, and in riper years he showed in an unmistakable manner that his opinion had changed; and when *Leonora* was brought out in Dresden under his direction, he took the greatest possible care to render the performance of the opera worthy of its celebrated composer.

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- a. NOCTURNE, IN A MAJOR, } ... *Field.*  
 b. "MIDNIGHT," (RONDO) ... } (1782—1837.)

—o—

JOHN FIELD, the well-known inventor of the agreeable musical form of the Nocturne, was born in Dublin. His earlier life presented the feature usually found at the commencement of an eminent musician's career. He showed extraordinary proofs of talent, and played the piano with great technical execution; but his performance wanted a stricter discipline to bring it to the point of real artistic excellence. The disciplinarian who impressed the sterner rules, even harshly, upon the talented boy, was Muzio Clementi. Field seems to have fulfilled all the expectations of his shrewd Italian master. Clementi used afterwards to speak of "Johnny Field his favorite pupil," and was proud of the beautiful playing of his protégé. But while we concede all possible merit to John Field as an executant, we cannot give unqualified praise to his compositions—his Nocturnes excepted. Field always composed like a clever amateur; whenever he tries a higher flight, or endeavours to write in a larger form, like that of a Concerto, the insufficiency of his studies becomes painfully apparent; and indeed, his more ambitious efforts have well-nigh been forgotten. His Nocturnes, on the other hand, will always keep an honourable place in the musical literature of our instrument. Field's Nocturne is essentially a little Romanza or Cantilena, which addresses itself in an unadorned, artless manner to our feeling. Its merit consists in its natural simplicity; its intrinsic beauty lies in the charming and easy flow with which its spontaneous and sweet

melody is poured forth. The Nocturne of Field emanates directly and solely from the sentiment, and is thus in some degree related to that half melancholy tendency which is first observable in Dussek. But whilst in Dussek we meet with a sweet sentiment which fills the soul without elevating it, Field's music does not even aim at so much, but produces merely a transient agreeable sensation, which leaves little trace behind it. Field's Nocturne was the original of the form which appeared later under the various names as Romanzas, Reveries, &c. &c. ; and the success of these modern fashions has unfortunately led to the abandoning of the larger forms, which were better able to fulfil the requirements of the art. The most universal adoption of this contracted form can scarcely be called an indication of progress, for it has encouraged the perpetuation of third-rate melodies, and the very slightness of the framework furnished a ready excuse for the meagreness of its contents. The very eagerness with which Field's Nocturnes were imitated is a sign of decay and poverty in the musical art, as in rushing after such prettinesses would be in the kindred arts of poetry, painting, and sculpture. As regards the value of Field's Nocturnes for purposes of instruction, it is undoubtedly very great. Each Nocturne requires a singing, well sustained and finely regulated touch, and the subdued tone necessary for the accompaniment presupposes an absolute independence of action between the left hand and the right.

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- a. BERCEUSE  
 b. SCHERZO IN B FLAT MINOR } ... *Chopin.*  
 (1810—1849.)



IT cannot be denied that of all the composers for the pianoforte, Chopin is the undoubted favourite of the fair sex ; and as such a preference brings with it a certain guarantee for good and interesting qualities, it is a pleasant duty to examine the reasons which made the talented Polish composer such a favourite. Chopin has certainly extended the field of musical expression. The time in which form and expression were identical, has long gone by. The art of music is undoubtedly the art of the poetry of sound ; but we detect in its historical development phases, which are quite analogous with the development of the general intellectual life. Granted that this foundation of poetry is accepted or recognised, we find in the musical art three distinct features ; namely, a symbolical, a classical, and a mere individual romantic tendency. The form of the different pieces represents the idea of the outward structure ; the form requires the immediate recognition of natural laws, and represents therefore the universal principle, or the principle of the great and entire world. Opposed to this principle is the individual feeling of the composer. Where the personal taste and individual feeling of the composer have submitted themselves to the entire recognition of these general laws and principles, and where individual tendencies have been subordinated and have deferred to the demands of the general laws of art, the composers have produced strictly classical works ; for we find all the necessary rules observed, and

are yet able to recognize the individual feeling of the composer. Such are the works of all the great classical composers. Mendelssohn was able in the present century to reproduce the tendencies of the old composers, and to reconcile our modern notions and feelings with the dogmas of that earlier time; in other composers, and most particularly in Chopin, we recognize on the other hand, the tendency to put the personal feeling in the foreground, and to give it a more prominent expression than was hitherto deemed right. For this reason, Chopin's works occupy a much narrower field than the works of other composers, for he accepted only those forms which were in accordance with his own personality. And this may account for our finding him succeed much better in the smaller forms, and more particularly in those forms which had a direct connection with his nationality, the Polonaises and the Mazurkas; but as he had also a disposition towards a certain sentimental, dreaming, melancholy expression, we find him likewise very happy in that form, a form so favourable to this tendency—the Nocturne. We might even go farther, and say that we find in the works of Chopin a general expression of the Polish character. Chopin continually blends and mixes the major with the minor modes. Of this new and decidedly charming effect, we already find indications in Weber's works; but with Weber this tendency originates in the dramatic principle, whereas with Chopin it originates in his Polish nationality. The sudden flashes of chivalrous enthusiasm, the outburst of joy at the hopeful prospect of deliverance from the hated yoke of merciless oppression; on the other hand, the feeling of deep and mournful resignation and despondency, passionate sorrow at a deplorable fate—these are, so to say, the salient traits of Polish character, and these mingled together in a hundred weird forms, are truth-



fully represented in Chopin's music. But this more strictly national expression leads to monotony, and in connection with general art, an inadmissible restriction or particularism. If Beethoven had composed merely as a Rhinelander, or Haydn and Mozart simply as Austrians, or Handel and Bach as Saxons, their works would certainly not have become so universally popular. It must indeed be admitted that Haydn's and Mozart's compositions are suffused with a certain light and cheerful spirit, which is characteristic of the Austrian people ; and that Bach and Handel evinced that peculiar earnestness, tenacity, and solidity, to which the Saxon Germans may justly lay claim ; but all these little peculiarities are forgotten in the multitude of general beauties. It may be said that the musical art is like one universal language, which all these great composers spoke, each in his own dialect ; and just this particular dialect lends a certain charm and a quaint interest to their individual utterances. But Chopin speaks the Polish language exclusively, and therefore his utterances are not generally intelligible. All the larger works of Chopin, such as his Concertos and Sonatas, possess great beauties of detail, but they cannot lay any great claim to perfection and roundness of form, and therefore are but little known.

Chopin came seldom into contact with the general public ; he was exceedingly difficult of access, and singularly sensitive of adverse criticism. He was always surrounded by a band of admiring friends, and was daily fed with the praises and flattery of his fair pupils. Indeed, he lived in an atmosphere of laudation ; the criticism of the outer world was to him the most distasteful of medicine. It is therefore evident that Chopin's compositions occupy a peculiarly separate position ; and it could not be said that the study of them contributes in any

great degree to the understanding of other works, and least of all would they affect the classical productions of a Beethoven. But if Chopin's music is powerless to assist us in playing Mozart or Beethoven, it will decidedly help us to improve, refine, and perfect our general technical execution, and none of his works will for this purpose be better than his splendid twenty-four Studies. But also in his Impromptus, in his Nocturnes, in his Ballades, do we find plenty of passages which, when properly used, will teach us the very soul and essence of expression. A permanent or exclusive study of Chopin could not be advised; his is a style which must be studied with discrimination; the frequent use of the chromatic principle, observable in his works, will, if too much followed, have an enervating influence, and may in some degree incapacitate us for the appreciation of simple but healthier music. But withal, the compositions of Chopin are an indispensable study for every one who desires to become acquainted with most of the beauties the instrument can reveal.

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In the whole wide range of our pianoforte literature there is scarcely a piece to be found so delicate, so transparent, one might almost say so much like filigree work as this Berceuse. The melody is simple and short, the bass remains entirely the same, and yet the piece, actually built on two or, at most, on four bars, does not become monotonous. Chopin appears to have pictured in his imagination a young mother, sitting beside the cradle and gently rocking the couch with its beloved occupant. She herself reclines on her chair, at first humming to her darling a sweet tune. By-and-by the mother dozes, and

all kinds of ethereal, lofty, and fantastical figures appear to her like a vision. Softer and softer become the movements of the cradle, simpler are the figures which pass in turn before the mother's fancy in her dreaming state ; quiet reigns more and more, and at last the cradle stands still ; mother and child are alike wrapped in quiet, peaceful sleep.

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BARCAROLE IN A MINOR, Op. 60. ... *Thalberg*.  
(1812—1871.)



IN listening to the compositions of the various authors since Clementi, we observe that the treatment continually becomes richer and fuller, more polyphonic in fact. The Pianofortes, particularly those manufactured by the principal French and English houses, have exhibited a richness of sound unknown till their time. It may be well here to notice the change which art underwent in consonance with the spirit of our age. The time of materialism had arrived. This was felt in every branch of Art. Music-sellers and publishers, formerly few in number, increased and multiplied. As shrewd men of business they perceived that light, pleasing music took immensely with the public. A kind of commercial activity that had no previous existence, was introduced into the musical world. The publishers gave orders to the composers to furnish them with light articles, and the composers furnished the goods and delivered them as per invoice. Thalberg, who possessed a very remarkable amount of technical execution, and who was, moreover, a well-educated musician, tried to bring this style to perfection, and to infuse into it an elegance, smoothness and euphony, combined with a splendour and brilliancy of execution till then unrealized. At that time the Italian Opera exercised undisputed supremacy in the Austrian capital. The aristocratic circles of Vienna patronized mostly Italian music, and, as a natural consequence, any virtuoso who aspired to success, had to offer in his concerts Fantasias on Italian operas. For the form of a



Fantasia Thalberg prepared for himself a model which he applied with scarcely any alteration in all his numerous works of this kind. First comes an introduction in which he anticipates in detached fragments the melodies to be treated. A Cantabile with ingenious Variations follows. This is again relieved by an Allegro, and finally the piece concludes with a broad Cantabile, surrounded by most intricate and complicated passages. Dividing the melody between the two hands, he allows the right hand to perform rapid passages whilst the left plays a complete and powerful accompaniment. Thus he produces the effect of a Duet. The whole compass of the keyboard is used ; not a moment of rest is given, and the effect produced is undeniably striking. Notwithstanding this hailstorm of notes, there is a strange absence of life and movement in Thalberg's compositions. They are sometimes monotonous, cold, and conventional. Still his musical talents are indisputable. He has a peculiarly happy manner of harmonizing his subject ; he is extremely clever in inventing new combinations of passages ; his phrases and ornaments are unexceptionably graceful and elegant. Thalberg's original compositions are well written, and show not only a complete mastery over all the resources of the instrument, but also a thorough knowledge of technical rules. His melodies, although cold and devoid of the sacred fire, are elegant and pleasing.

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## HANDEL.

**H**allelujah, Glory to the Most High,  
**A**nd praises to His name for evermore,  
**N**ever dost thou with rapture cease to pour !  
**D**ivine thy power, to Heaven thou bring'st us nigh ;  
**E**ternal will remain thy great renown,  
**L**ight from above, through human gifts, sent down.

## HAYDN.

**H**umour and wit, such as we all admire,  
**A**rise incessant from thy festive lyre ;  
**Y**oung, ever young, attractive, pure and clear,  
**D**ear to the aged and to children dear,  
**N**e'er canst thou fail to charm the grateful ear.

## SCHUBERT.

**S**trains from thy tuneful lyre so pure and sweet,  
**C**hords of such rich and mellow tone we meet,  
**H**eaven seems with gracious sympathy to send  
**U**s a warm greeting through a genial friend ;  
**B**eloved by all who real art pursue,  
**E**ndeared to all who thy affection knew ;  
**R**emaining still a star of stronger light  
**T**han many now so pale though once so bright.



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